

CPYRGHT

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Editorial
irks reader

Editor, Intelligencer Journal:

Concerning your editorial of October 19, I was amazed to read that the patience of Americans is growing short at the exercise of their Constitutional rights on the part of peaceful marchers. How long will Americans tolerate such rights as those of freedom of speech and peaceful assembly? Only as long as the United States remains a democracy committed to freedom rather than going under to the totalitarianism implied by your point of view. I plead guilty to considering the preservation of these Constitutional rights here in the United States to be more important for American democracy than Viet-

nam is. You feel justified in mentioning the "nearly 70 per cent" of Americans who support President Johnson's foreign policy. Conversely, doesn't the 30 per cent remaining constitute a significant portion of the population which deserves to be heard?

I might ask you to explain which group is truly "anti-Viet Nam:" the one which is appalled by the bombing of innocent South Vietnamese civilians and wishes to end the war, or the one which sees South Viet Nam as a convenient battlefield for the prestige of the United States?

For all of our help the South Vietnamese have received freedom neither from the succession of oppressive governments we have supported there or directly from us. The Saigon generals and war profiteers love us, but the people are being threatened and killed by our bombs much more than by VC guerilla action. Can anyone doubt that these people, after many long years of war against several different enemies, ardently desire peace? And yet the Ky dictatorship has brutally repressed all South Vietnamese peace movements while our CIA agents are popularly thought to foment trouble between Catholic and Buddhist factions to prevent opposition to the war.

Actually, the attempts to smear and discredit the Viet Nam peace groups are not surprising as a last resort tactic. Deplorably, in this country if a strong factual case is lacking, a charge of communism is always good to arouse popular sentiments. The McCarthy era and even our local politics show this all too well.

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